



## MAPBD WATCHDOG

MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION FOR PURE BRED DOGS

Founded 1964

*"Promoting Responsible Dog Ownership"*



mapbd.org

May 1, 2015

### HB 4353 of 2015    HB 4355 of 2015

**HB 4353 and HB 4355 require registered animal shelters and animal protection shelters to conduct criminal background checks on anyone wishing to adopt a pet.** These checks would utilize ICHAT (Internet Criminal History Access Tool), which is maintained by the State Police.

**MAPBD POSITION:** No civilized person advocates animal abuse. However, there are still problematic issues in the language of these bills, some of which would result in unintended consequences.

- Under these bills, the term "animal abuse" covers everything from misdemeanor neglect to felony animal torture.<sup>1</sup> Yet, **HB 4353 would prevent all violators, regardless of the severity of the offense, or the individual circumstances of a case, from adopting a pet for a period of 5 years. Judges already have full authority in sentencing to impose ownership restrictions, if needed, on a case by case basis.** (Examples: elderly persons who might need assistance or animal hoarders who need psychological help are not willfully committing animal abuse).
- **HB 4355 states shelters could refuse to allow pet adoption not only to those persons who were convicted, but anyone arrested or charged with an animal abuse offense, regardless of the final disposition of the case, including dismissal. This is a civil rights violation. We can think of no other legal circumstance in which citizens face additional sanctions when their cases are dismissed.**
- In the latest MDARD Shelter Report (2013), 164 MDARD registered shelters (only 83% compliance) reported a total of 80,375 cats and dogs adopted in 2013 in Michigan. **There is absolutely nothing in these bills addressing shelter compliance.** What are the penalties to shelters for not conducting checks on all applicants for a shelter pet? Who will monitor this?

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MAPBD is a Michigan non-profit organization founded in 1964. Its members and member clubs advocate for responsible dog ownership and work to protect the rights of Michigan citizens to own, breed, and enjoy their dogs.

**For more information contact MAPBD President Bob Darden: [bobkdarden@hotmail.com](mailto:bobkdarden@hotmail.com)**

<sup>1</sup> MCL 750.49, MCL 750.50, MCL 749.50A, MCL 750.50B, MCL 750.50C, MCL 750.158.